

# McMillin Observatory

Herrick Archives Number 052

## A. IDENTIFICATION & LOCATION

### 1. Name

1. 1 Officially named "Emerson McMillin Astronomical Observatory" by Board of Trustees on April 10, 1895.

1. 2 Alternate names noted:

Emerson McMillin Observatory

Astronomical Observatory

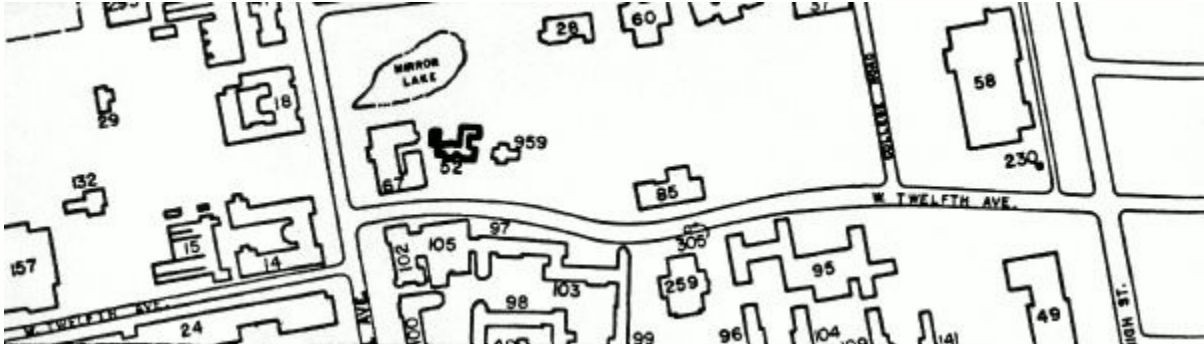
The Observatory

See Addendum No. 3

### 2. Location

2.1 Located at 236 West 12th Avenue. See map below.

2.2 For greater detail, see Sheet 110 in the book of campus maps in the University Archives.



For identification of other buildings shown, see Appendix A.

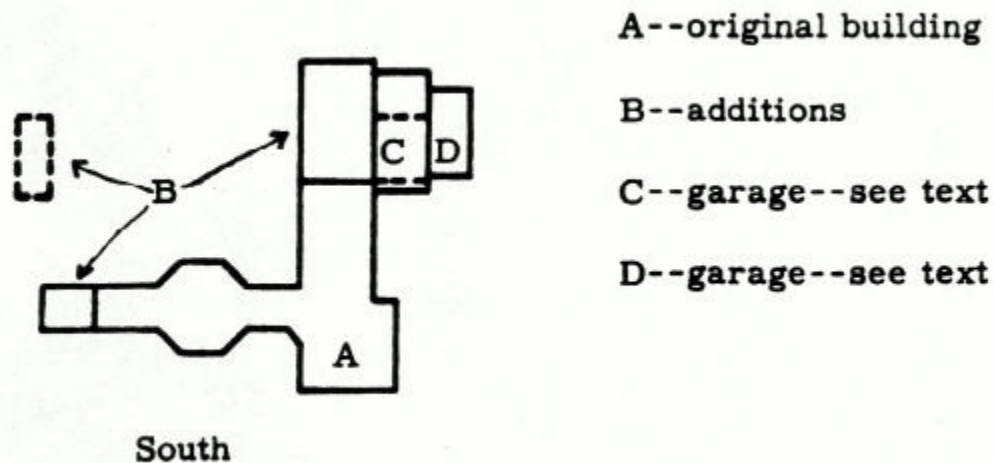
### 3. General Description

3.1 Type of construction: Wood frame with brick exterior.

3.2 No. of stories: Basement and one story.

3.3 Increments of construction:

Building was constructed in two parts--see sketch.



3.4 Size of building: 5,076 sq. ft. gross; 4,071 sq. ft. net assignable

3.5 Volume of building: 57,700 cubic feet (PP)

### CONSTRUCTION -- ORIGINAL BUILDING

1. On April 10, 1895 the Board of Trustees approved the plans and related document prepared by J. N. Bradford and authorized the solicitation of bids by contractors.
2. Bids were received on June 10, 1895 (T). All bids were rejected on June 11, 1895, and the President and Secretary of the Board were authorized to contract with such person or persons as could undertake its erection at the price or prices within the estimates (T). This procedure presumably was possible because the funds for the building were from private sources. Arrangements were made for bills in connection with the construction to be presented to the Capital City Bank for payment (T 5/9/95).
3. The general contractor was Charles H. Woodruff (McC 1:125).
4. Beginning of work:

According to Cope, contracts were awarded and work was started in June 1895 (R 1895096, Pt I:17).

5. Completion and occupancy:

5.1 Building was practically completed and the various instruments mounted in place by the end of 1895. (Cope: 428)

5.2 The formal opening was on June 16, 1896 (T).

### C. PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION -- ADDITIONS

1. On July 7, 1902 Professor Lord "laid before the Board of Trustees plans, drawings, specifications and estimates for certain addition to the building." The Board appropriated \$2,900 for the additions and authorized the Secretary to solicit bids (T).
2. No further mention of the additions is found in Board minutes, but in the 1902-03 Annual Report (p. 75) it is noted that the additions were completed and ready for use in the autumn of 1902.
3. Undated drawings of "proposed additions" bearing Professor Lord's initials are in the University Architect's

files. The additions shown there are labeled "B" in the sketch above.

## D. GARAGES

There are two garages attached to the east side of the building, and used by the President.

The garage designated "C" is of masonry construction. The portion between the dotted lines was apparently built first. This center section shows on a small scale drawing dated January 15, 1910. However, the garage may have been added to the drawing at a later date, and the date of revision has not been noted.

The garage labeled "D" is of frame construction. According to Mrs. Fawcett, it was built in 1956 at the beginning of President Fawcett's administration.

See Addendum No. 1

## E. COST

1. McCracken (1: 8A) reported the cost of the building at \$5,476.25 and the equipment at \$9,796.03, make a total of \$15,272.28.
2. The Board of Trustees on July 7, 1902 appropriated \$2,900 for additions to the building (T), but no record of the amount actually spent has been noted. If we add the \$2,900 to McCracken's 1899 figures, we get a total of \$17,172.28.
3. In the first Business Office report (1909-10), the building is listed at \$16,000, and this figure remained unchanged through 1970-71.

## F. MISCELLANEOUS

1. On October 14, 1891 Professor Henry C. Lord present to the Board of Trustees a set of plans prepared by Frank L. Packard. The Board approved the plans, appropriated \$1,200 for the project, and directed the Executive Committee to proceed with the project. A month later (November 17) the Board suspended the project.
2. Money for the building and equipment was given by Emerson McMillin. His gift was contingent upon the expenditure by the Board of Trustees of an equal sum for improving the grounds in the vicinity of the Observatory (T 5/9/95).
3. The Board minutes for May 20, 1917 record the receipt of a gift of a "wireless receiving outfit" for use at the Observatory.
4. A ten page account of the development of the Observatory, written by Thomas C. Mendenhall, can be found in Cope: 424ff.
5. The "theodolite house," shown in dotted outline as part of B in the sketch, is not longer standing. Its demolition was approved by President's Cabinet on October 27, 1959 (P)

## G. PHOTOGRAPHS

1. In Photoarchives:

X 1737 -- original building

X 1741 -- includes additions

2. Others:

Hopper: 13

McC: 126

John H. Herrick  
April 13, 1972

### ADDENDUM NO. 1

#### Garage

Cabinet minutes for November 14, 1916 directed McCracken to construct a brick garage on the east side of the observatory building. This was preceded by discussions on June 20, August 25, and September 30, 1916. No record has been found to indicate that the garage was actually built according to the November 14, 1916 directive.

#### Closing and Demolition

Cabinet approved demolition of the building on August 20, 1963, but no action followed. The building was closed in 1968 when the new astronomy facilities became available in Smith Laboratory (Building 065).

John H. Herrick  
March 16, 1976

### ADDENDUM NO. 2

The Board of Trustees on May 7, 1976 again approved demolition of this building. The demolition was completed by July 1, 1976 (L:7/1/76).

John H. Herrick  
July 29, 1976

### ADDENDUM NO. 3

The following additional name for this building has been found on old campus maps.

Perk. Obs. (error)

John H. Herrick  
September 21, 1981